

# MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL



2017 | ANNUAL  
REPORT

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# MISSION STATEMENT

## Missouri State Rehabilitation Council

### OUR VISION

The Missouri State Rehabilitation Council envisions a society that values all of its members equally and provides opportunities so that all people are able to meet their needs, fulfill their dreams and participate in society.

### OUR MISSION

To ensure that persons with disabilities have opportunities to be as productive as possible by advising Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation that services provided to persons with disabilities are:

- of the highest quality.
- consumer directed.
- responsive to consumer choice.
- effective.
- individualized.
- culturally specific and relevant to labor market trends.

### OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

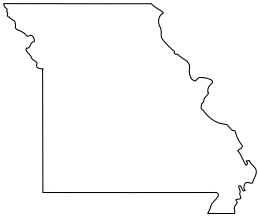
To work in partnership with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation to achieve positive outcomes for persons with disabilities by:

- providing input on the state plan, policies and practices affecting services to persons with disabilities.
- identifying strategies to address the needs of people who are not being served or who are being underserved.
- obtaining and interpreting consumer input.
- identifying corrective action consistent with that input.
- advocating for adequate resources to ensure that the rehabilitation needs of all Missourians are met.

To support Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation in complying with applicable laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

*(Adopted Nov. 4, 1999)*

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



## MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

3024 Dupont Circle ■ Jefferson City, Missouri 65109  
Phone: 573-751-3251 ■ Fax: 573-751-1441

**Tim Tadlock**  
Gallatin  
Chairperson

**Bob Hosutt**  
Eureka  
Vice Chairperson

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**James Ankrom**  
Smithville

**Dennis Atkins**  
Viburnum

**Daniel Cayou**  
Jefferson City

**Judy Heard**  
St. Louis

**Joseph Matovu**  
Kansas City

**Gary Otten**  
St. Louis

**Lori Pace**  
Rogersville

**Mary Stodden**  
St. Charles

**Aimee Wehmeier**  
St. Louis

**Brent Yerian**  
Jefferson City

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**C. Jeanne Loyd**  
Jefferson City  
Ex Officio Member  
VR Assistant Commissioner

December 31, 2017

The Honorable Eric Greitens  
Governor of Missouri  
State Capitol  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Governor Greitens:

On behalf of the members of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council, I am proud to present the Council's annual report for Fiscal Year 2017. In these pages, you will find the progress made by Missouri citizens who were served by vocational rehabilitation programs.

Each Council member has unique experiences in advocating for the rights of our fellow Missourians whose physical or mental disabilities may pose barriers to productive employment. Through our quarterly meetings and committee deliberations, we have given our support to Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation to empower individuals with disabilities and to encourage decisions that lead to greater self-sufficiency.

We have advised Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation on innovative programming to reach the underserved populations in the state and on exploring additional methods of obtaining consumer satisfaction feedback.

It has been my great privilege to work with members of the Council as well as with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation staff, all of whom are dedicated to providing our citizens with the opportunity to make choices in obtaining meaningful employment. Employment is a key to independence.

Sincerely,

Tim Tadlock  
Chairperson



# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

## CHAIRPERSON



TIM TADLOCK  
Gallatin

## VR ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER



C. JEANNE LOYD  
Jefferson City

EX OFFICIO MEMBER

## VICE CHAIRPERSON



BOB HOSUTT  
Eureka



JAMES ANKROM  
Smithville



DENNIS ATKINS  
Viburnum



DANIEL CAYOU  
Jefferson City



JUDY HEARD  
St. Louis



JOSEPH MATOVU  
Kansas City



GARY OTTEN  
St. Louis



LORI PACE  
Rogersville



MARY STODDEN  
St. Charles



AIMEE WEHMEIER  
St. Louis



BRENT YERIAN  
Jefferson City



# COUNCIL'S PURPOSE

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was first authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended in 1998 (referred to hereafter as the Act). Section 105 of the Act requires the state vocational rehabilitation agency to establish a council.

The SRC was initially formed on June 1, 1993. Members are appointed by the governor and serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms. As required by the Act, SRC members represent the Statewide Independent Living Council; the Parent Training and Information Center; the Client Assistance Program; the Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program; the Office of Special Education, which is the state agency responsible for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the Missouri Workforce Development Board; community rehabilitation program service providers; disability advocacy groups; current or former applicants/recipients of vocational rehabilitation services; and business, industry and labor.

The SRC is responsible for reviewing, analyzing and advising VR regarding its performance on such issues as eligibility; the extent, scope and effectiveness of services; and any other functions affecting people with disabilities. Full SRC meetings are held quarterly on the first Thursday of February, May, August and November. Subcommittees meet as needed throughout the year.

During FY 2017, the SRC was actively involved with VR in the activities below:

MISSOURI	STATE	REHABILITATION	COUNCIL
Attended and participated in VR public hearings to provide input on the combined state plan	Coordinated and participated in presentations and activities with other councils and agencies including the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Client Assistance Program, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the Department of Mental Health, the Parent Training and Information Center, Missouri Assistive Technology, the Hearing Loss Association, the Governor's Council on Disability, the Division of Workforce Development, and the Office of Special Education	Reviewed and provided recommendations to VR regarding the combined state plan's comprehensive statewide needs assessment, goals, priorities, standards and performance indicators, performance accountability measures, and comprehensive system of personnel development	Provided comments to VR regarding issues pertaining to waiting lists (Order of Selection)
Evaluated and provided recommendations on the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services and consumer satisfaction feedback			Reviewed hearing decisions and mediation outcomes
Assisted VR staff in preparing the SRC's 2017 annual report for the governor and the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration on the status of vocational rehabilitation services in Missouri		Provided recommendations to VR on policy revisions and rule changes	Reviewed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and new regulations pertaining to Title IV

# MISSION, VISION & PRINCIPLES

## Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation

### MISSION

Our mission is to provide opportunities and resources to eligible individuals with disabilities leading to successful employment.

### VISION

Our vision is to provide everyone with a great VR experience.

### OPERATING PRINCIPLES

We will:

- Act with a sense of urgency.
- Provide quality customer service.
- Maximize our resources.
- Do the right thing.
- Put people first.
- Continuously evaluate our practices/processes.



# LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR



C. Jeanne Loyd, Ed.D. • *Assistant Commissioner*  
3024 Dupont Circle • Jefferson City, MO 65109 • [dese.mo.gov](http://dese.mo.gov)

December 31, 2017

The Honorable Eric Greitens  
Governor of Missouri  
State Capitol  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Governor Greitens:

The annual report presented to you from the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for federal Fiscal Year 2017 provides information on the Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation employment program for individuals with disabilities.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation has operated under an Order of Selection since October 2003 due to the number of applicants requesting services, rising service costs and limited federal funding. The Rehabilitation Act requires eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities to receive services first. All other eligible individuals receive services as funds become available.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation cleared the waiting list for services during FY 2017 and helped 5,173 individuals reach successful employment outcomes with a success rate of 56.2 percent for individuals who received services and exited the program.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation works closely with school districts across the state. The program annually provides transition services, including pre-employment transition services, to approximately 11,000 high school students and youth with disabilities.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation grant dollars expended for purchased client services from community vendors are effective and help local economies. In addition, the total annual increase in earnings from application to closure for competitively employed clients in FY 2017 was over \$67 million. The program's customer satisfaction survey results are consistently among the top in the nation.

In closing, the Council and I offer our sincere appreciation for your personal interest and support in serving people with disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Jeanne Loyd". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized.

C. Jeanne Loyd  
Assistant Commissioner  
Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services

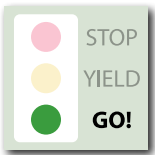


# VR HIGHLIGHTS

Important items from FY 2017 regarding VR's positive impact on the quality of consumers' lives and the communities it serves:



**28,552** consumers worked with VR counselors.



**5,173** consumers with disabilities achieved successful employment outcomes.



**1,895** youth with disabilities reached successful employment outcomes.



**1,430** successfully employed consumers received supported employment services.



**431** successfully employed consumers received Individual Placement and Support services.



**97%** of successfully employed consumers had significant disabilities.



**\$67,450,812** was the total annual increase in income from application to closure for 5,127 competitively employed consumers.

# AGENCY OVERVIEW

Prepared on behalf of the SRC, this annual report highlights various programs and services of VR during federal Fiscal Year 2017 (Oct. 1, 2016, to Sept. 30, 2017). Because FY 2017 was a transition year due to a recent law change, some information was collected under requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

On Oct. 1, 2003, due to insufficient funds to serve all eligible consumers, VR began operating under an Order of Selection with three priority categories. Eligible consumers with the most significant disabilities are required by law to receive services first (Category 1). Eligible consumers who have less significant disabilities are required to be placed on a waiting list for services (Categories 2 and 3).

During FY 2017, VR counselors worked with more than 28,000 people in various categories with an average daily census greater than 14,000. VR helped 5,173 consumers reach successful employment outcomes and cleared the waiting list for services.

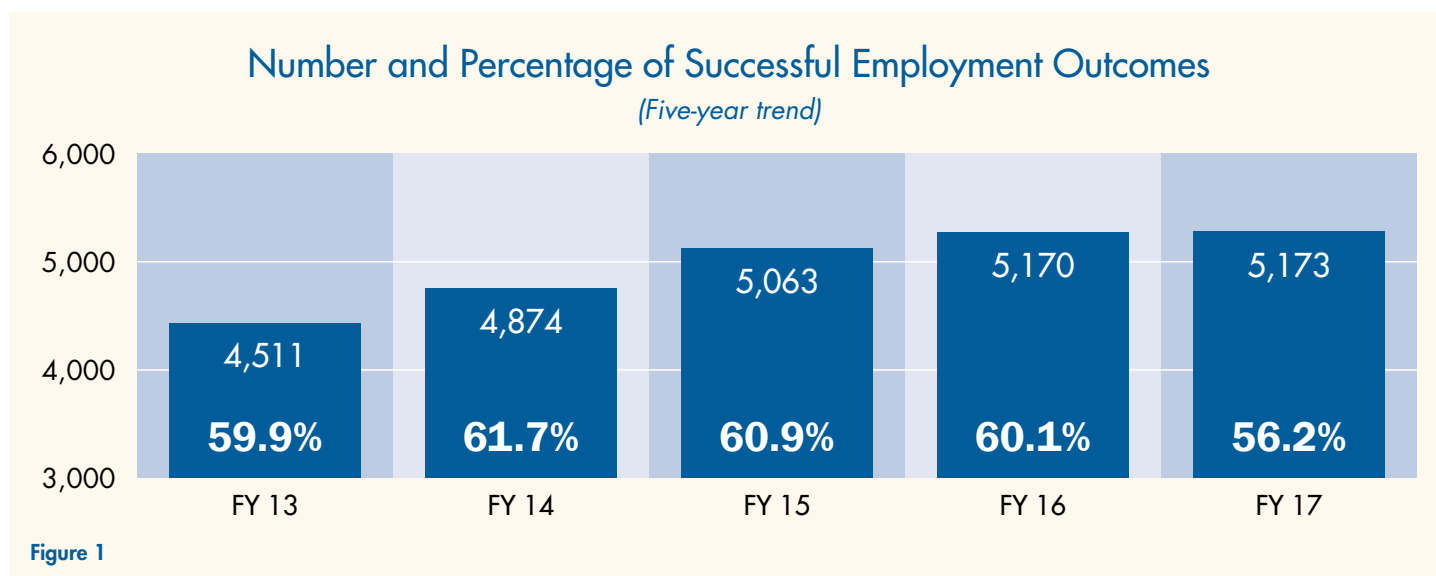
Figure 1 (below) illustrates the number of successful outcomes and the percentages of success during the past five years. In FY 2017, more than 56 percent of consumers who received services through VR were successfully employed. This statistic is a percentage of all eligible consumers leaving VR who received services.



**Mickaela Williams** worked at the Sylvia G. Thompson Residence Center in Sedalia as part of a summer work experience program. VR collaborated with the residence center and the Center for Human Services (a CRP) to offer this program to VR-eligible students receiving pre-employment transition services.

## State Funding and the Social Security Reimbursement Program

VR receives state funding from the general revenue fund, the Missouri Lottery and the Department of Mental Health. The match requirement is 21.3 percent state funding and 78.7 percent federal funding.



The Social Security Administration (SSA) reimburses state vocational rehabilitation agencies for the costs of providing services to assist SSA disability recipients in becoming gainfully employed. VR uses Ticket Tracker software to interface with VR's case-management system. The software matches and identifies consumers receiving SSA disability benefits whom VR helped in reaching their employment goals. Ticket Tracker has streamlined the consumer identification and reimbursement submission process, enabling VR to receive SSA reimbursements in a more timely and efficient manner. In FY 2017, VR received \$3,048,949 in reimbursement claims. A portion of this funding helps support the Centers for Independent Living.

## Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into federal law in 2014 to strengthen the workforce development system by aligning and improving employment, training and education programs. WIOA makes changes to programs authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, especially the VR program. Areas in which this legislation affects the program include employment for individuals with disabilities, employer relationships, services for youth and students with disabilities, and collaboration with other federal and state agencies and partners.

With regard to VR, the new law focuses on providing services to individuals with disabilities, including youth and students with disabilities, to assist them in achieving competitive, integrated employment. VR continues to help individuals with disabilities obtain, maintain, regain and advance in employment. VR is committed to developing new relationships with employers and providing flexible strategies like on-the-job training, internships, apprenticeships and customized employment. VR has worked with other agencies to create a combined state plan that describes how VR and its partners will collaboratively deliver integrated services to Missouri's job seekers, workers and employers under WIOA.



**April Mason-Donovan** (left), VR counselor III, and **Rob Zirfas** (right), VR district supervisor, were part of a VR staff panel presentation at the August 2017 SRC meeting.



**Daniel Cayou**, SRC member, presented at the February 2017 SRC meeting on Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services, where he is the director of advocacy services.

## Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

VR and the SRC jointly conduct an annual comprehensive statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of Missourians with disabilities. The conclusions and recommendations of the assessment are incorporated into VR's goals and priorities for the purpose of improving services for individuals with disabilities.

VR uses many methods to collect information for the assessment including consumer satisfaction surveys, public hearings, VR strategic teams, SRC input, VR case data and national census statistics.

Two areas that the assessment specifically focuses on are the needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities and

individuals from populations that have been traditionally unserved or underserved by vocational rehabilitation programs. The FY 2017 needs assessment identified the minority populations of Hispanics and African-Americans, along with individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI), as underserved. Figure 2 (below) reflects the closure percentages by ethnicity for FY 2017.

VR remains committed to improving services for underserved populations, increasing their employment outcomes and reducing the number of consumers from these populations who drop out prior to receiving services. One of VR's goals is to increase competitive, integrated employment outcomes for individuals with ASD.

VR utilizes the following strategies to address these areas of need:

- VR employs a part-time diversity consultant to assist with improving services to underserved areas, developing training programs and establishing outreach strategies for consumers from diverse cultures.
- The Cultural Diversity Team (composed of community rehabilitation program staff, the diversity consultant, and VR management and district office staff) meets throughout the year to develop strategies for serving individuals from diverse cultures.
- VR provides employees with training opportunities on cultural competency that cover aspects of diversity.
- VR has appointed an autism services liaison to serve as a resource for its staff throughout the state. This liaison works with providers on strategies for better serving individuals with ASD.
- VR has developed Employment Services Plus, which is designed to assist individuals with ASD, TBI or cultural deafness/hearing loss who require additional supports to reach successful employment outcomes.

The assessment also addresses the necessities of youth and students with disabilities including their need for pre-employment or other transition services. Another of VR's goals is to increase the number of employment outcomes for youth with disabilities. For strategy information on this area of need, see page 15.



**Rebecca Maynard**, VR director, presented on Individual Placement and Support services during the February 2017 SRC meeting.

## Closure Percentages by Ethnicity – FY 17

STATUS	WHITE	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	OTHER
5,173 successful employment outcomes	76%	20%	4%
4,031 closed unsuccessfully after services	70%	26%	4%
4,783 closed after eligibility before services	72%	23%	5%

**Figure 2**



# PARTNERING

## Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Partners

WIOA requires the alignment of core programs in order to provide coordinated and streamlined services. These core programs are VR; Rehabilitation Services for the Blind; Adult Education and Literacy programs; Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs; Wagner-Peyser Employment Services; and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families programs. Teams composed of representatives from WIOA core partner programs, as well as other partner organizations, have been formed to develop strategies for serving mutual clients. These teams have identified focus areas, such as best practices and agency cross-trainings, that can be shared statewide and at the local level. All program partners strive to improve the workforce system and services to job seekers, employees and employers.

VR collaborates, coordinates and cooperates with partner programs to ensure that individuals with disabilities benefit from seamless access to career services, education and training. VR also participates in business services teams within the workforce system to better serve employers' needs. VR offers a dual-customer approach by supporting its job candidates and businesses in order to achieve successful outcomes for both.



**Tom Dills** (left), owner, and **Crystal Dills** (right), secretary/treasurer, of Outpost Expressions spoke at the Annual Inclusion Summit in West Plains about their positive experiences when hiring individuals with disabilities. This event brought together representatives from various agencies to further advance the tenets of WIOA.

## Centers for Independent Living

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are community-based nonresidential programs designed to promote independent living for people with disabilities. In Missouri, there are 22 CILs that offer independent living services. The CILs are funded through federal and state independent living grants and are managed by local boards composed of individuals with disabilities who have been successful in establishing their own independent lifestyles.

VR and the CILs work together on a regular basis to share referrals and provide services to mutual clientele. A number of CILs have VR district office staff as active board members. VR and the CILs have developed a summer work experience program to provide pre-employment transition services. The CILs offer potentially VR-eligible students access to job exploration activities, workplace-readiness training, social support and instruction on self-advocacy (including peer mentoring). Last summer, 13 CILs were involved in the program and worked with 122 students.

## Department of Mental Health

The Department of Mental Health's (DMH) Divisions of Behavioral Health (DBH) and Developmental Disabilities (DD) have been longstanding partners with VR in assisting eligible individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation services to gain employment. Partnership activities include the funding of DB101, a customized Missouri benefits-planning website. Cross-system collaboration remains ongoing through system change initiatives, grant and technical support opportunities, and local/regional trainings. VR has appointed a DMH liaison, and DMH has representation on WIOA teams consisting of core partner programs and other partner agencies.

A recent reorganization of DD service providers, updated regulations for home and community-based services that impact Medicaid waiver services, and WIOA implementation are central to current activities and planning for DMH-DD and VR staff. Regional agency cross-trainings are being developed to communicate these evolving changes, which support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

In partnership with DBH, Individual Placement and Support (IPS), an evidence-based supported employment service for adults with serious mental illness, has been a focus. IPS requires close program and clinical relationships between local mental health and vocational rehabilitation staff to ensure success.

VR is collaborating with DMH and the Departments of Economic Development and Social Services in implementing the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program. This program operates on the foundation that community-based, integrated employment should be the first priority for employment-related services for youth and adults with significant disabilities. Publicly funded systems are urged to align policies, regulations and funding priorities to promote community inclusion and the employment of individuals with disabilities in integrated settings earning at or above the minimum wage.

## Community Rehabilitation Programs

VR and community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) collaboratively work with an outcome-based service model that emphasizes quality employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. CRPs are nonprofit organizations accredited by recognized professional associations that have developed commonly accepted processes for evaluating employment-related services. All independently owned and operated, CRPs provide services that may include vocational planning, job development and placement services, skills training, specialized employment services, supported employment, and transition services.



**Ian Shadrick** (left), program manager, and **Keith Roderick** (right), interim deputy director, presented at the May 2017 SRC meeting on Rehabilitation Services for the Blind.

Multiple ad hoc teams composed of VR and CRP staff have worked together to develop and design new processes. VR and its CRP partners have implemented several projects to improve services. During summer 2017, a six-week work experience program for students with disabilities was held. Twenty-six CRPs and 657 VR-eligible students participated.

Collaboration and partnership are cornerstones of the relationship between VR and CRPs and have fostered an environment of creativity and innovation. The VR-CRP steering committee meets regularly to review progress on their organizations' joint projects and on service delivery.

## Missouri Reentry Process

VR participates in the Missouri Reentry Process, which encourages collaboration among government and local agencies to improve the transition of offenders leaving prison and returning to local communities and work. State government agencies are the Departments of Corrections, Economic Development, Elementary and Secondary Education, Health and Senior Services, Mental Health, Public Safety, Revenue, Social Services, Transportation, and the Office of the State Courts Administrator. Other partnering agencies include the federal probation system along with local law enforcement, faith-based organizations, service providers and treatment programs.

In addition, VR is participating in a pilot program with the Department of Corrections in southern Missouri. VR is providing career counseling and coordinating services with other agencies for six-month pre-release offenders with disabilities to assist them with finding employment and returning to their communities.

# VR SERVICES

## Transition Services

WIOA places a significant emphasis on services to youth and students with disabilities. The law's intent is to ensure that young individuals with disabilities are better prepared and have more opportunities for competitive, integrated employment. WIOA requires that VR (in collaboration with local education agencies) provide pre-employment transition services to eligible or potentially eligible students with disabilities ages 16 to 21. These services include job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs, workplace-readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy (including peer mentoring).

VR has helped to develop and implement innovative programs to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. VR also has established partnerships with the University of Missouri's College of Education, CILs, CRPs, businesses and local school districts. With its partners, VR is working to expand pre-employment transition services to all parts of the state.

VR provides youth with disabilities ages 14 to 24 a variety of other transition services such as job placement, supported employment, training and rehabilitation technology. A team of professionals from VR, local school districts and other agencies has been assembled to offer support and technical assistance on these services.



VR partnered with Schnucks in High Ridge and NextStep for Life (a CRP) to provide VR-eligible students with a summer work experience program. From left to right: participants **Paola Dominguez**, **Misty Dailey** and **Alexis Donville** (front); and **Mike Harpole**, NextStep site supervisor (back).

Supported Employment Disability Categories of Those Served — FY 17

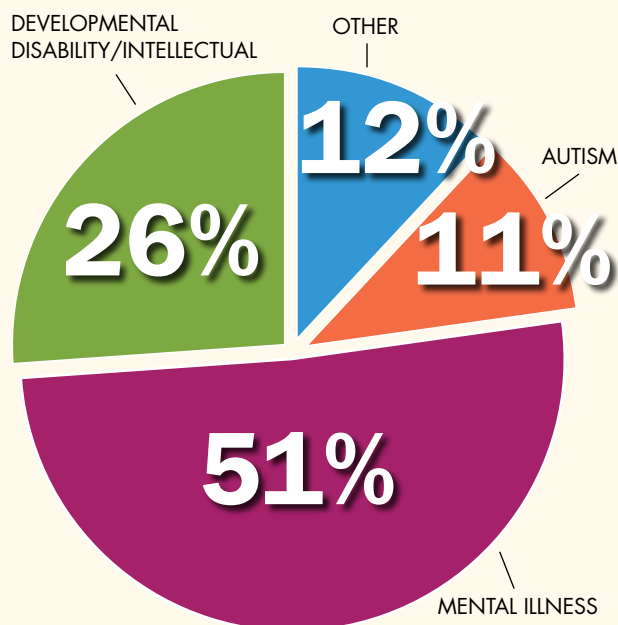


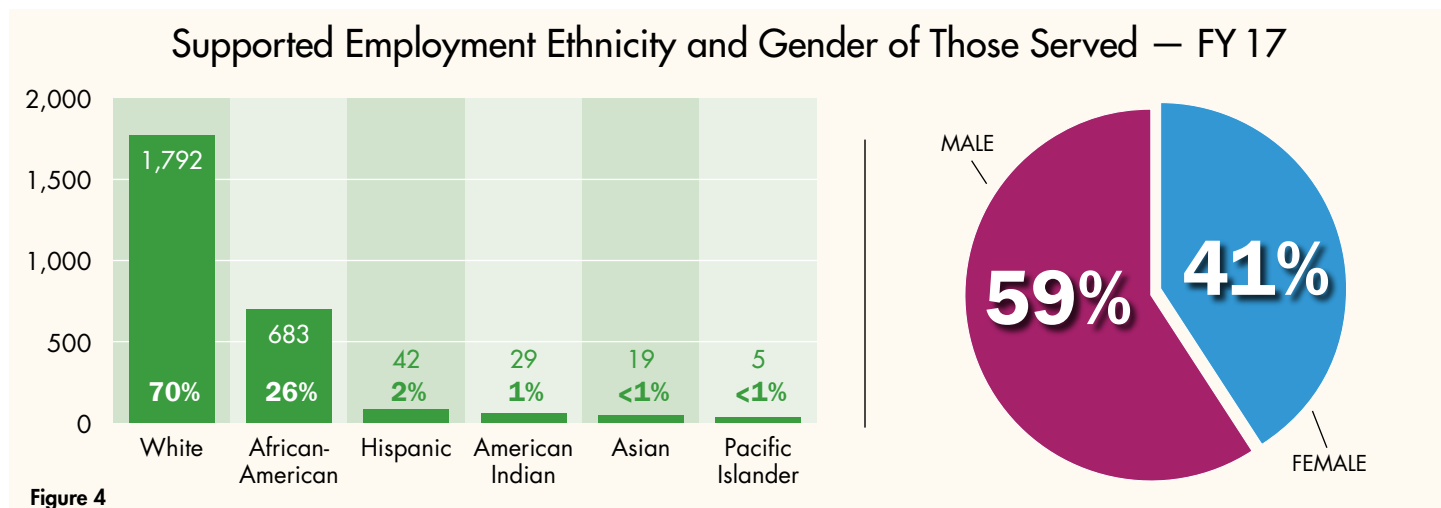
Figure 3

## Supported Employment

VR provides supported employment (SE) services to a diverse population of consumers as indicated by Figures 3-4 (pages 15-16). Some of these services are jointly provided by DBH-DD. SE is defined as competitive work in an integrated work setting with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. During FY 2017, 55.7 percent of consumers who received SE services and exited the program were successfully employed.

In FY 2017, VR worked with 109 CRPs that provide SE services and cover all counties in Missouri. An outcome-based model of SE services is used that features a period of discovery and exploration with the consumer to develop vocational direction and community-based job exploration. Outcomes include job placement, 30 days of independent employment and 90 days of employment. In addition to these milestones, on-the-job and off-site supports may also be authorized for consumers.

VR places an emphasis on the development of natural support systems to help consumers participating in supported employment successfully remain in the workforce. These natural supports help to reduce the cost of providing SE services. Figure 5 (page 16) shows the average cost of services, hourly wages and other statistics for supported employment.



## Other Supported Employment Statistics — FY 17

Average cost of supported employment per consumer - - - - -	\$3,310
Average hourly wage per consumer - - - - -	\$8.94
Average hours per week worked per consumer - - - - -	24
Success rate - - - - -	55.7%
Successful outcomes - - - - -	1,430
Total participants - - - - -	2,570

Age	Number	Percentage
Less than 25 years	897	35%
25 through 34	643	25%
35 through 44	442	17%
45 through 54	355	14%
55 through 64	209	8%
65 and over	24	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,570</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 5**

*Note: All information in figures 3-5 applies to SE services only. Statistics are based on the number of consumers who exited the program either successfully or unsuccessfully after receiving SE services.*



## Rehabilitation Technology

In FY 2017, VR provided a variety of rehabilitation technology services, assistive devices and equipment to 1,016 individuals who received services and exited the program for a total cost of \$7,625,660. VR purchases assistive devices to help consumers with increasing, maintaining or improving functional capabilities. Devices could include prosthetic or orthotic equipment, hearing aids, wheelchairs, and other powered mobility equipment. Rehabilitation technology services include consultation, evaluation, design, customization, adaptation, maintenance, repair, therapy and technical training.

VR and Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT) have collaborated to develop a cooperative agreement to ensure the maximum statewide utilization of services. The agreement provides a plan for service coordination; for using resources to the best advantage; for information sharing, technical support and training; to facilitate the referral of potentially eligible individuals between agencies; and to help eligible people obtain rehabilitation technology services. A VR staff member is a representative on the MoAT Advisory Council.

Several VR counselors have specialized caseloads in the area of rehabilitation technology. Located throughout Missouri are seven VR counselors and one assistant director who are skilled in manual communication for the deaf and hard of hearing. Also, designated hard of hearing specialists in the Kansas City area are acquiring additional education on hearing aids and rehabilitation technology for individuals with hearing loss.

VR utilizes assistive technology demonstration sites located at CILs across the state for exploring, reviewing and demonstrating various devices, services and resources that are available to individuals with alternative communication needs. VR counselors are allowed to borrow rehabilitation technology equipment from MoAT for clients to test before purchase.

In April, MoAT presented the Power Up 2017 Assistive Technology Conference and Expo. The conference was open to service providers, consumers, independent living specialists, VR staff and other professionals in the rehabilitation field. Eleven VR staff members attended the event. The conference was successful in providing an opportunity to view state-of-the-art technology and equipment designed to enhance and promote the independence and quality of life of people with disabilities.



Student participants worked at Cave Spring Park in Kansas City as part of the 2017 summer work experience program. VR partnered with Diversity Placement Services (a CRP) to provide the experience. From left to right: participants **Joseph Jackson** and **Julesha King**; and **Tamara Cress**, VR counselor IV.

# SUCCESS STORIES



Kayden Ginsky

## Work – it's what Kayden Ginsky loves to do. As a senior at

Camdenton High School, Kayden already knows that working is what he wants to do after graduation.

Last summer, Kayden worked in a paid internship position through VR's summer work experience program. VR offers paid six-week summer work opportunities in integrated settings to eligible students with disabilities. Kayden was eligible for this VR program because of a developmental disability. In addition to their work, students in the program receive classroom training in soft skills such as effective communication and teamwork.

VR partnered with Preferred Family Healthcare, a CRP, and Lake Regional Health System to offer the program Kayden participated in. He interned at Lake Regional Hospital in Osage Beach where he worked in dietary, the laundry facilities and recycling. He was always busy, which is how he likes to be on the job. He also became more comfortable talking with others.

"I went outside my bubble there," Kayden said. "At the end of the program, I started talking to people that I didn't know. When I think about myself, I like to lead people."

Joetta House is Kayden's community based instruction (CBI) teacher at his school. As part of the CBI program, he spends part of the day working in the community and gaining valuable life skills. In the summer, Preferred Family Healthcare hired Joetta as a program specialist. She was on-site daily with Kayden, modeling job tasks and providing direct guidance. For the classroom component, she provided instruction on how to show a positive attitude and enthusiasm while on the job, on the importance of networking, and on how to manage money.

While Kayden enjoyed the entire experience, he said the "cool part" was being paid for the work he was doing. He used his earnings to buy his first car, which he speaks of with great pride and says that it's "very fun to drive."

"The best part is being able to drive to school early," he said.

The end result of Kayden's summer was experience in a real-life work setting and the maturity and confidence that come from the responsibility of maintaining a job. And, don't forget a new car. ■



## Scott Nelson



Photo by Allyssa D. Dudley, courtesy of Missouri Lawyers Media

### Scott Nelson has spent the

majority of his life knowing there was something different about himself. It wasn't until after he graduated college that he received a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). You might recognize the term "Asperger syndrome" as Scott said he is on the high-functioning end of the autism spectrum.

The social stigma of ASD can be unforgiving – bullying had played a role in his decision to drop out of high school. Eventually, Scott earned his GED and graduated from Truman State University in Kirksville, but it took him eight years to complete college as his symptoms slowed his progress.

After graduation, he returned home to St. Louis. He wanted to work in education, but he knew his strengths and weaknesses were not suited for most classroom positions. Before his diagnosis, he had worked lower-wage jobs but knew he was capable of more. He worked as an educational advocate for a year, but the stress of that job brought about high levels of anxiety because of the Asperger's. He applied for other jobs but never got past the interview stage.

"Asperger's is so subtle, it's hard to notice," Scott said. "I am not being rude. It's just that I have more of a flat voice because of Asperger's. It's not because I am unemotional."

Scott began working with St. Louis Arc, a community service provider of support and advocacy services for individuals with disabilities. The Arc helped Scott determine what he was qualified to do, offered assistance with filling out applications and provided supports on the job. The Arc also referred him to VR, which financed his services. Scott had a good relationship with his VR counselor, Regina Rathert, as he knew they shared similar outlooks.

Through the Arc, Scott got a job with the Sandberg Phoenix & von Gontard law firm in St. Louis. Managing Partner Bhavik Patel volunteers at the Arc and saw an opportunity for his firm to employ someone who receives the Arc's services. Scott updates the firm's expert-witness database, and an Arc employment specialist provides on-site assistance to help Scott perform his duties and broaden his communication skills.

Scott's patience in finding a career has paid off. In October, he received the Best of Missouri Award from State Treasurer Eric Schmitt. The award recognizes contributions to the workforce from individuals with diverse abilities.

Scott advises anyone having difficulty in finding a job to take time and be purposeful in knowing what you want to do. He believes people with Asperger's and high-functioning autism have a harder time because their disability is not visible. But he said that we can always help those who are misunderstood or those who are being overlooked. ■

# SUCCESS STORIES



John Weggenmann

## John Weggenmann embarked on a journey that eventually brought

him back home. As a home and school coordinator at Missouri School for the Deaf (MSD), he provides student support in the classroom and in the dorms. But he has another connection – he is an MSD graduate as well. When he returned there it felt odd at first, but he quickly fell into the pace of his job and realized that MSD would always be his “home away from home.”

As the only one born deaf in his family, John faced challenges both at home and out in the world. His local school did not have much exposure to deaf individuals, and the district thought a school for the intellectually disabled was the best answer. Since John did not have an intellectual disability, that suggestion could not have been more inappropriate. Instead, he spent several years at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing with an oral-language focus, but it was challenging for him to speak with classmates and teachers. At his mother’s insistence, John was mainstreamed in a regular classroom where he had a wonderful resource teacher and began to learn sign language by age 5. Things changed in fifth grade when he was assigned a different teacher who did not have much experience in signing or with Deaf culture. As a result, his grades began to drop.

At that point, he transferred to MSD where he found his identity and his community. As everyone at the school does, John communicates through American Sign Language. His world opened up, and he easily interacted with others. Barriers were no longer an issue. John was referred to VR while in high school, and he continued with services as he transitioned to college. VR assisted in financing his education by covering tuition, room and board, and books. He received both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in social work from Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., a university for the deaf and hard of hearing.

John believes VR made it possible for him to become a social worker. He worked with Kate Blanchard, a VR counselor for the deaf and hard of hearing in the St. Louis West office. He said Kate was one of the main reasons he was able to complete his degrees and that “she was an amazing support system.”

Whether coincidence or fate brought him home to MSD, John said he enjoys being an advocate for deaf students. His life experiences allow him to relate to them and their families. MSD has some students who are deaf and have parents who are not adequately informed about available resources.

“They don’t understand the language or culture that comes along with having a deaf child,” John said. “I am able to go in and support the family and advocate for the students.” ■



# CONSUMER SATISFACTION

Consumer satisfaction with staff and services is a VR priority, and the SRC's Program Evaluation Committee continues to work with VR on reviewing and analyzing feedback from individuals who receive VR services. This feedback is shared with management, supervisors and counselors and is used as a tool to improve services, evaluate staff performance and determine training needs.

During FY 2017, survey letters and postage-paid envelopes were mailed to a random sample of 9,656 consumers at various stages in the rehabilitation process (with a response rate of 14 percent). Survey feedback was positive. Results showed that 98 percent of consumers surveyed felt they were treated with respect, 97 percent felt that staff was available when needed and 95 percent felt their counselor explained their choices. The overall results are listed on page 22.

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## FY 2017 Consumer Comments

"Thanks to everyone in the VR program; *it has been an experience I shall never forget.*"

"VR gave me *support, hope and the financial aid* needed to *work toward my dreams.*"

"VR helped give me *purpose* and a *better standard of living.*"

"VR helped my son feel like *he was not forgotten after school.*"

"My contacts with VR were *extraordinary, far beyond any expectation.*"

"The VR program was *a life/career changer* for me.  
I was *pleased with the program.*"

"VR gave me *all the tools* that I needed *to achieve my goals.*"

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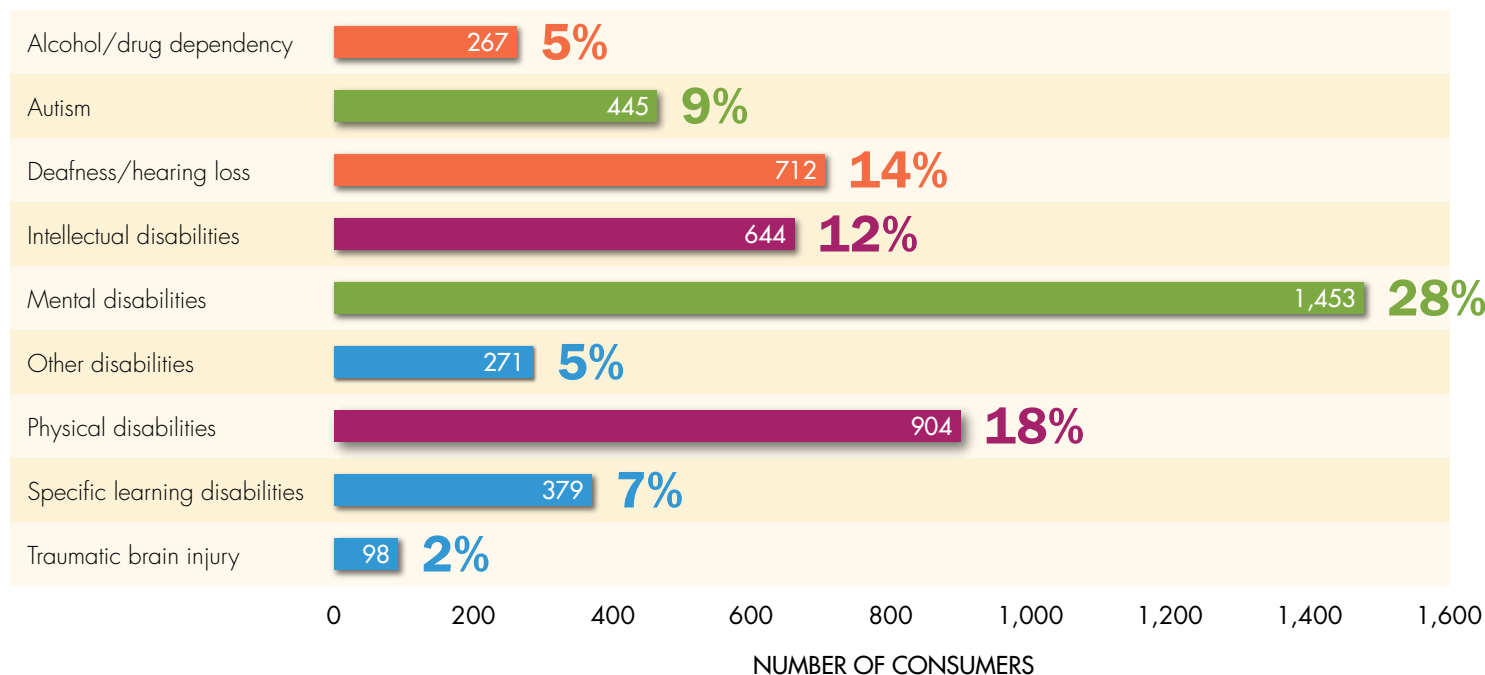
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Survey Results (Specific group responses during FY 17)	Total responses received	Staff was available		Staff treated me with respect		I knew purpose of VR services		Counselor helped plan services		Counselor explained choices	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Total responses	1,375	97%	3%	98%	2%	95%	5%	93%	7%	95%	5%
Open cases	689	99%	1%	99%	1%	96%	4%	95%	5%	97%	3%
Successful outcomes	473	97%	3%	99%	1%	96%	4%	96%	4%	96%	4%
Unsuccessful outcomes; closed before services	63	85%	15%	90%	10%	88%	12%	67%	33%	78%	22%
Unsuccessful outcomes; closed after services	150	91%	9%	97%	3%	92%	8%	85%	15%	91%	9%
Supported employment consumers	294	97%	3%	98%	2%	97%	3%	94%	6%	96%	4%
Consumers with autism	128	99%	1%	99%	1%	97%	3%	92%	8%	94%	6%
Consumers with deafness/hearing loss	180	97%	3%	98%	2%	91%	9%	93%	7%	96%	4%
Consumers with mental disabilities	393	95%	5%	97%	3%	96%	4%	92%	8%	93%	7%
Consumers with physical disabilities	257	98%	2%	100%	0%	97%	3%	96%	4%	98%	2%
Consumers with traumatic brain injury	30	100%	0%	97%	3%	90%	10%	96%	4%	100%	0%
Consumers with other disabilities	299	97%	3%	98%	2%	92%	8%	94%	6%	95%	5%

# PROGRAM DATA

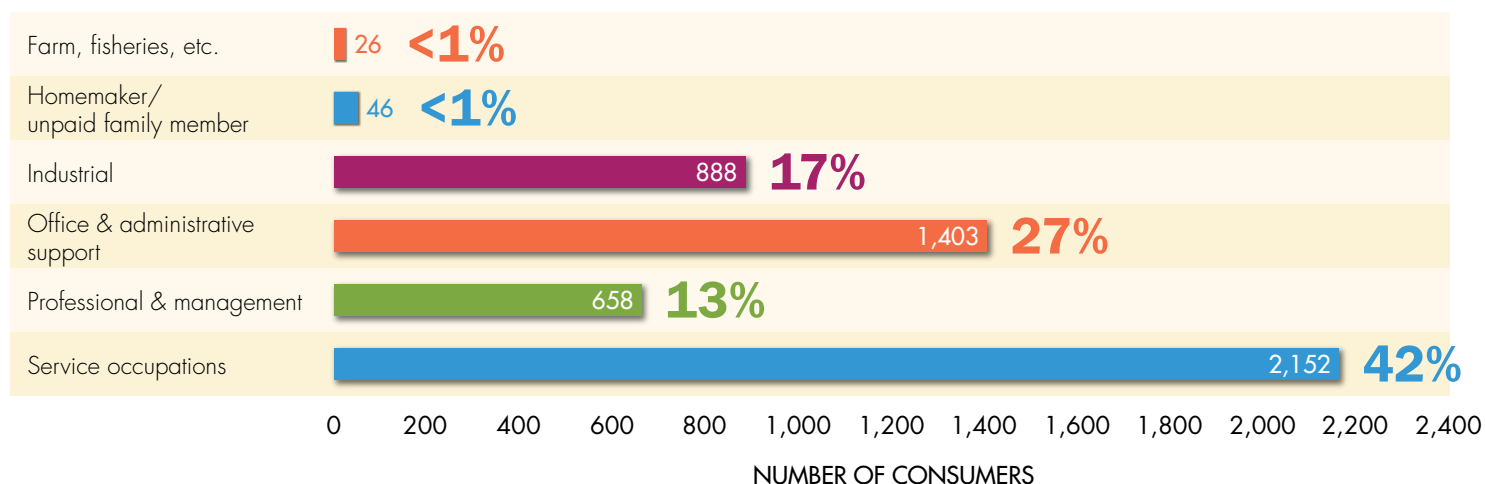
## Disability Categories — 5,173 consumers with successful employment outcomes (FY 17)

### TYPE OF DISABILITY

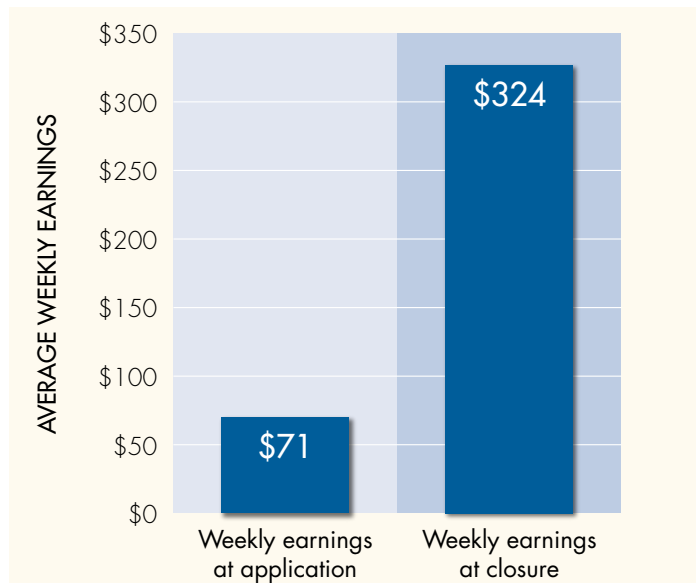


## Occupations — 5,173 consumers with successful employment outcomes (FY 17)

### OCCUPATION

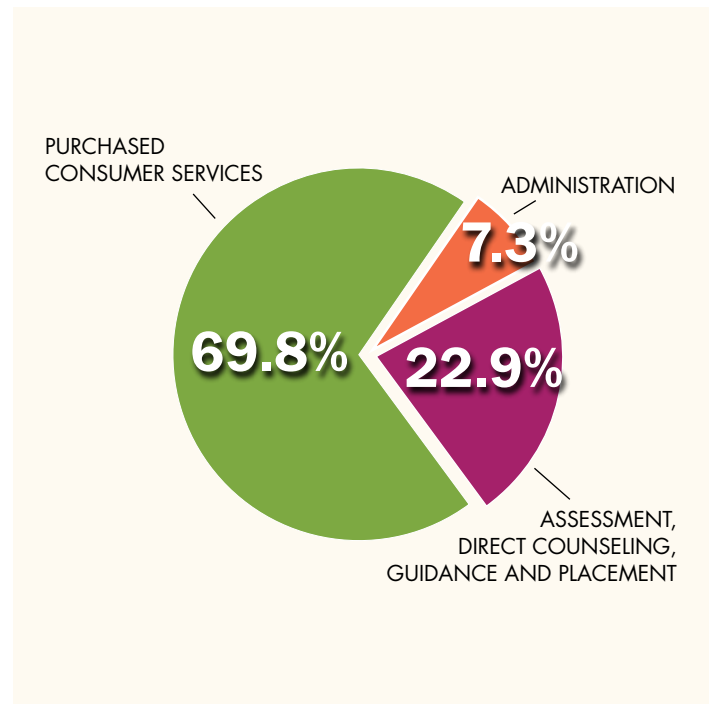


## Impact of VR Services — FY 17



With an increase in average weekly earnings of \$253 for 5,127 competitively employed consumers, the total annual increase in income from application to closure amounted to \$67,450,812.

## Expenditures — FY 17



## Characteristics — Consumers with successful employment outcomes (FY 17)

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	2,954	57%
Female	2,219	43%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,173</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
White	3,940	76%
African-American	1,037	20%
Hispanic	97	2%
American Indian	56	1%
Asian	32	<1%
Pacific Islander	11	<1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,173</b>	<b>100%</b>

Age	Number	Percentage
Less than 25 years	1,645	32%
25 through 34	1,026	20%
35 through 44	764	15%
45 through 54	787	15%
55 through 64	653	13%
65 and over	298	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,173</b>	<b>100%</b>



# VR OFFICES

## 1) CAPE GIRARDEAU VR

3102 Blattner Drive, Suite 103  
P.O. Box 1087  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703-1087  
Toll-free: 877-702-9883

## 2) CENTRAL OFFICE VR

3024 Dupont Circle  
Jefferson City, MO 65109-6188  
Toll-free: 877-222-8963

## 3) CHILlicothe VR

603 W. Mohawk Road  
Chillicothe, MO 64601-3919  
Toll-free: 866-572-4049

## 4) COLUMBIA VR

900 W. Nifong Blvd., Suite 210  
Columbia, MO 65203-4467  
Toll-free: 877-222-8961

## 5) FARMINGTON VR

901 Progress Drive, Suite 100  
Farmington, MO 63640-9108  
Toll-free: 800-640-7110

## 6) HANNIBAL VR

112 Jaycee Drive  
Hannibal, MO 63401-3673  
Toll-free: 877-222-8960

## 7) JEFFERSON CITY VR

1500 Southridge Drive,  
Suite 200  
Jefferson City, MO 65109-5710  
Toll-free: 866-661-9106

## 8) JOPLIN VR

801 E. 15th St., Suite B  
Joplin, MO 64804-0804  
Toll-free: 877-222-8964

## 9) KANSAS CITY DOWNTOWN VR

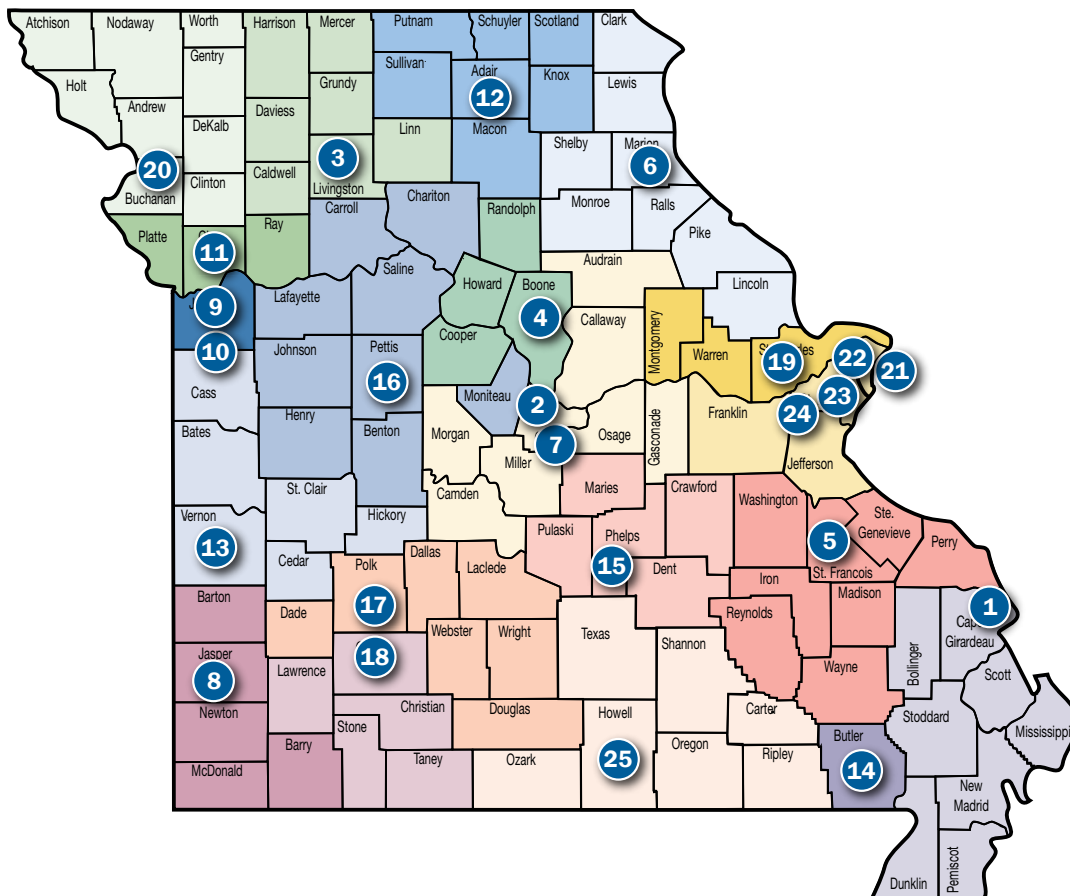
615 E. 13th St., Suite G-3  
Kansas City, MO 64106-2856  
Toll-free: 866-971-8568

## 10) KANSAS CITY EAST/TRANSITION VR

Joseph P. Teasdale State  
Office Building  
8800 E. 63rd St., Suite 260  
Raytown, MO 64133-4957  
Toll-free: 866-831-1363

## 11) KANSAS CITY NORTH VR

8030 N. Oak Trafficway  
Kansas City, MO 64118-1209  
Toll-free: 877-270-0198



## 12) KIRKSVILLE VR

1612 N. Osteopathy, Suite B  
Kirksville, MO 63501-2759  
Toll-free: 877-222-8962

## 13) NEVADA VR

621 E. Highland, Suite 2  
Nevada, MO 64772-1088  
Toll-free: 800-598-3471

## 14) POPLAR BLUFF VR

1903 Northwood Drive, Suite 3  
Poplar Bluff, MO 63901-2400  
Toll-free: 800-281-9894

## 15) ROLLA VR

1101 Kingshighway  
Rolla, MO 65401-2922  
Toll-free: 800-890-2867

## 16) SEDALIA VR

2115 W. Broadway  
Sedalia, MO 65301-2506  
Toll-free: 800-924-0419

## 17) SPRINGFIELD NORTH VR

613 E. Kearney  
Springfield, MO 65803-3425  
Toll-free: 877-222-8965

## 18) SPRINGFIELD SOUTH VR

1735 W. Catalpa, Suite C  
Springfield, MO 65807-1243  
Toll-free: 877-222-8967

## 19) ST. CHARLES VR

3737 Harry S. Truman Blvd.,  
Suite 400  
St. Charles, MO 63301-4052  
Toll-free: 855-283-2681

## 20) ST. JOSEPH VR

State Office Building  
525 Jules, Room 201  
St. Joseph, MO 64501-1900  
Toll-free: 877-702-9876

## 21) ST. LOUIS DOWNTOWN VR

220 S. Jefferson Ave., Suite 110  
St. Louis, MO 63103-2536  
Toll-free: 866-971-8569

## 22) ST. LOUIS NORTH VR

4040 Seven Hills Drive,  
Suite 257  
Florissant, MO 63033-6767  
Phone: 314-475-7999

## 23) ST. LOUIS SOUTH VR

3256 Laclede Station Road,  
Suite 103  
St. Louis, MO 63143-3709  
Toll-free: 877-222-8968

## 24) ST. LOUIS WEST/TRANSITION VR

9900 Page Ave., Suite 104  
St. Louis, MO 63132-1438  
Phone: 314-587-4877

## 25) WEST PLAINS VR

3417 Division Drive, Suite 2  
West Plains, MO 65775-5900  
Toll-free: 877-222-8959



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